

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: JUNE 29, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
 MERLINO
 CONOVER
 STROUGH

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS DICKINSON
 FRASIER
 SIMPSON

OTHERS PRESENT:

LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK, TOURISM
REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK CIVIC CENTER COALITION:
 ELIZABETH MAHONEY, BOARD MEMBER
 ED MOORE, BOARD MEMBER
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BROCK
 TAYLOR
 SEEBER
 WOOD
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
SARAH MCLENNITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Kenny advised that due to the absence of the County Treasurer they were going to skip Agenda Item III and move right the report of activity from the ACCC (Adirondack Civic Center Coalition).

Privilege of the floor was extended to Elizabeth Mahoney, of the ACCC, who apprised upon the suggestion of Martin Auffredou, County Attorney, they had revised the format of the Performance Report and would submit a revised copy of the first quarter report with the second quarter Performance Report, which was due July 15th. In regards to performances during the summer, Ms. Mahoney stated there was very little activity during the summer except for some meetings scheduled in Heritage Hall. She noted they planned on taking advantage of this slow time to complete some much needed renovations, such as painting and work on the marquee on the outside of the building. She mentioned they were hopeful the work on the marquee would generate some sponsorship revenue.

Ms. Mahoney stated that the new website developed by Mannix Marketing would be launched within the next few weeks. She noted occupancy tax funding was used to pay for the contract with Mannix Marketing for this work.

Ms. Mahoney reported that they had recently hired a new Facilities Manager who would be reporting to work at the end of the month. She stated that the individual they hired was from this region and she noted additional details would be forthcoming. She said the Interim Facilities Manager, John (Jack) Walter, would remain on staff to until the new Manager was fully up to date and trained later in the summer. She commented they were not seeking any additional disbursements at this time.

Mr. Conover asked whether Ms. Mahoney felt the ACCC was on track with their business plan and she replied affirmatively. She reiterated they had scheduled the much overdue renovations during

the summer months because they knew there would not be much activity taking place during this time frame. She noted one of their goals was to increase the number of bookings in the summer for next year. In regards to the business plan, Ms. Mahoney advised that over the last few months they had been applying for grants, as well as utilizing grant funding to pay for the painting marquee work.

Ed Moore, of the ACCC, advised that they had put together a 3 year budget that included the \$750,000 grant awarded to them from the State that would pay for the work on the marquee, as well as some of the other renovations required. In addition, he stated they had been awarded grant funding through Senator Little's Office in the amount of \$100,000 for the painting work that would be completed. He commented he believed things were coming together for them in regards to the business plan.

Mr. Auffredou informed that he would like to discuss the monthly reports provided by the ACCC to the Committee. He commented the communication between the ACCC and his office had been great thus far. He said he had been aware that this was a learning process both on his part and that of the ACCC and would take some time to perfect, but, he believed they were progressing. He noted that the contract between the ACCC and the County required that the ACCC submit quarterly Performance Reports, as well provide updates regarding their activity at the Occupancy Tax Committee meetings every month. He said following the discussion he had with Mr. Kenny on the matter, and the fact that there would be little activity at the GFCC (Glens Falls Civic Center) except for the renovations, he would suggest that they suspend the requirement that the ACCC provide updates at the Committee meetings until September. He explained ACCC would still be required to submit their quarterly Performance Report by July 15th; however, he said, they would not have to provide an update on their activities to the Committee until the September meeting. He mentioned this would allow them to focus on the renovations being completed and training the new Facilities Manager.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously that the contract requirement for the ACCC to provide updates regarding their activities be suspended until September of this year.

Mr. Kenny mentioned that Kate Johnson, Tourism Director, had provided the report included with the agenda that provided a comparison of the average room rate charged in 2014 versus 2015 for the Boys Basketball Tournament, Americade and the Hudson Valley Volunteer Fireman's Convention, and he provided a brief overview of same. He mentioned the Adirondack International Food & Wine Festival scheduled for August 6-9, 2015 at the GFCC had been cancelled. He suggested the \$5,000 in occupancy tax funding that had been awarded for the event be returned to the occupancy tax reserve fund and the Committee concurred.

Mr. Conover asked whether it was possible to reflect the total number of rooms available to reserve on the report comparing the average room rate charged in 2014 versus 2015 for the aforementioned events, as there could be an increasing occupancy rate against fewer rooms. Leisa Grant, Principle Account Clerk for the Tourism Department, replied she was unsure, as the data was compiled from the Smith Travel Report.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Strough and seconded by Mr. Conover, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 9:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Deputy Clerk of the Board